

Testimony Submitted to the Appropriations Committee
Submitted By: Keith Mullinar,
Vice-President and Treasurer, CT State Independent Living Council
Friday, February 27, 2015
RE: H.B. No.6824:
An Act Concerning The State Budget For the Biennium Ending
June Thirtieth 2017

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Keith Mullinar. I'm a Glastonbury resident, an advocate for persons with disabilities, and Vice-Chair and Treasurer of the CT State Independent Living Council.

Among the most draconian cuts that affect Connecticut's disability community is the proposed elimination of funding for the Centers for Independent Living. The proposed \$528,680 represents an annual 14 cents per head of the recommended budget that equates to roughly \$11,111 for each Connecticut resident.

The centers serve people with disabilities and save the State money by assisting people to live independently rather than incurring the huge cost of living in nursing facilities and similar institutions. In 2014, the CILs transitioned 111 people from nursing facilities to community living for a savings of at least \$5M. In addition, 600 people received services that allowed them to remain at home resulting in a further savings to the State of at least \$540,000.

Certainly there are issues in constructing a budget, but putting things into perspective it seems to me that funding for the CILs is money well spent! In this day and age, in a society that has supposedly moved on from the dark ages, it's distressing to see support for the disability community being eroded. If anything, it should be boosted. The well-being of people should not be measured only in dollars but in how we, as a society, view and support each other, especially those with disabilities.

The overarching goal of the CILs is to support and empower individuals be more self-sufficient on the road to being as independent as possible.

Finally, please consider the matter of dignity, perhaps the keystone to achieving a bearable quality of life, and enhanced by being as independent as possible. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Appropriations Committee on this matter of humanness where, if this budget cut to the CILs is upheld, a great deal of social harm will result.